

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
SPARTANBURG DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	)	CRIMINAL NO.: <u>7:23-456</u>
	)	18 U.S.C. § 2
	)	18 U.S.C. § 371
	)	18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(1)(A)
	)	18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(6)
	)	18 U.S.C. § 923(a)
-versus-	)	18 U.S.C. § 924(a)(2)
	)	18 U.S.C. § 924(a)(1)(D)
	)	18 U.S.C. § 924(d)(1)
	)	28 U.S.C. § 2461(b)
DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO)	
DAQUASIA CATHERINE MERCADO)	
RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ)	

SEALED INDICTMENT

USOC CLERK, GREENVILLE, SC
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COUNT 1

THE GRAND JURY CHARGES:

1. That beginning at a time unknown to the grand jury, but beginning from at least in or around January 2020, and continuing thereafter, up to and including the date of this Indictment, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, Defendants **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO**, **DAQUASIA CATHERINE MERCADO** and **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ**, knowingly and willfully did combine, conspire, confederate, and agree together and with others known and unknown to the grand jury, to commit the following violations:

- a. To engage in the business of dealing in firearms without a license, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(a)(1)(A); and,
- b. To make false statements with regard to the acquisition of firearms from licensed firearm dealers, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(a)(6).

MANNER AND MEANS

2. It was part of the conspiracy that Defendants **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO** and **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ** would recruit, pay, and receive firearms from straw purchasers;

3. It was further part of the conspiracy that Defendants **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO** and **DAQUASIA CATHERINE MERCADO** would by dishonest means, procure firearms, under the guise of purchasing firearms for themselves, when in fact, the firearms were intended to be sold and used by others;

4. It was further part of the conspiracy that Defendants **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO** and **DAQUASIA CATHERINE MERCADO** would travel to and from South Carolina to transport the firearms across interstate lines to deliver firearms to New York;

5. It was further part of the conspiracy that Defendant **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ** would pay Defendant **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO** for the firearms using the web-based application CashApp;

6. It was further part of the conspiracy that Defendants **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO** and **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ** would engage in the business of dealing in firearms without a license.

OVERT ACTS

7. In furtherance of the conspiracy and to affect the objects of the conspiracy, the following overt acts, among others, were committed in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere:

- a. From in or around January of 2020, and continuing thereafter, up to and including the date of this Indictment, Defendants **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO** and **RUBEN**

- ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ** recruited, paid, and received firearms from straw purchasers;
- b. From in or around October 9, 2020, and continuing thereafter, up to and including the date of this Indictment, Defendant **DAQUASIA CATHERINE MERCADO** straw purchased firearms and transferred them to Defendants **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO** and **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ**, and to others, known and unknown to the grand jury;
 - c. From in or around January of 2020, and continuing thereafter, up to and including the date of this Indictment, Defendant **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO** straw purchased firearms and transferred them to Defendant **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ**, and to others, known and unknown to the grand jury;
 - d. From in or around June of 2020, and continuing thereafter, up to and including the date of this Indictment, Defendant **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ** transferred multiple payments totaling \$25,744.50 to Defendant **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO** via CashApp for the purchase of firearms;
 - e. From in or around January of 2020, and continuing thereafter, up to and including the date of this Indictment, Defendants **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO**, **DAQUASIA CATHERINE MERCADO** and **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ**, and others known and unknown to the grand jury, disposed of firearms acquired through straw purchases by selling or transferring them to others;
 - f. Counts 2-40 are incorporated herein, as if set forth verbatim, as overt acts.

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.

COUNT 2

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

That beginning at a time unknown to the grand jury, but beginning at least in or around January of 2020, and continuing thereafter, up to and including the date of this Indictment, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, Defendants **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO** and **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ**, not being licensed dealers of firearms within the meaning of Chapter 44, Title 18, United States Code, did willfully engage in the business of dealing in firearms;

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(a)(1)(A), 923(a) and 924(a)(1)(D).

COUNTS 3-40

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

That on or about the dates set forth below, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, Defendants **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO**, **DAQUASIA CATHERINE MERCADO** and **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ** as principals, aiders and abettors, and as co-participants in jointly undertaken criminal activity, did knowingly make false and fictitious written statements in connection with the acquisition and attempted acquisition of firearms, to wit, the firearms listed in the table below from various licensed dealers of firearms within the meaning of Chapter 44, Title 18, United States Code, which statements were intended and likely to deceive each licensed dealer of firearms, as to a fact material to the lawfulness of the sale and disposition of said firearms to Defendants **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO** and **DAQUASIA CATHERINE MERCADO**, in that Defendants **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO** and **DAQUASIA**

CATHERINE MERCADO represented that each was the actual transferee/buyer of the firearm, when in fact, each was acquiring the firearm or attempting to acquire the firearm on behalf of other persons, including Defendant **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ** and others known and unknown to the grand jury as set forth in the following Counts:

- a. Defendant **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO**, aided and abetted by Defendant **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ** and others known and unknown to the grand jury:

Count	Date	Dealer	Make/Model/Caliber/Serial Number
3	January 10, 2020	All Stars Gold & Pawn, Spartanburg, SC	1. SCCY/CPX-2/9mm/552428
4	September 25, 2020	All Stars Gold & Pawn, Spartanburg, SC	2. Hi-Point/C9/9mm/P1471869 3. Taurus/PT22/.22/AVH15169
5	September 26, 2020	First Cash Pawn, Spartanburg, SC	4. Beemiller/C9/9mm/P1430969
6	September 28, 2020	All Stars Gold & Pawn, Spartanburg, SC	5. Beretta/BU Pico/.380/PC042926
7	September 28, 2020	C&C Ammo, Inc., Boiling Springs, SC	6. Diamond Back/DB380/.380 ACP/ZC8266 7. Smith & Wesson/M&P22C/.22LR/HJK2648 8. Ruger/EC9s/9mm/458-04004
8	October 9, 2020	Cash Today Pawn & Jewelry, Spartanburg, SC	9. Phoenix Arms/HP22/.22LR/4567670 10. Phoenix Arms/HP22/.22LR/4568114 11. Phoenix Arms/HP22/.22LR/4568121
9	October 10, 2020	C&C Ammo, Inc., Boiling Springs, SC	12. Taurus/PT-25/.25ACP/Z001058 13. Taurus/Spectrum/.380ACP/1F086987

Count	Date	Dealer	Make/Model/Caliber/Serial Number
10	October 12, 2020	Eastside Pawn, Cowpens, SC	14. Taurus/Spectrum/.380/1F023684 15. SCCY/CPX-2/9mm/C025568 16. Taurus/Spectrum/.380/1F023739 17. Taurus/Specturm/.380/1F023789
11	October 13, 2020	T&K Outdoors, Spartanburg, SC	18. Taurus/G3/9mm/ABK014764 19. Taurus/G2C/9mm/ABK031741
12	November 24, 2020	Eastside Pawn, Cowpens, SC	20. Ruger/LCP/.380/371090728 21. Lorcin Engineering/L380/.380/281942 22. Diamond Back/DB9/9mm/YL5872 23. Diamond Back/DB9/9mm/YL5344
13	November 25, 2020	Cash Today Pawn & Jewelry, Spartanburg, SC	24. Taurus/G2C/9mm/ABC378130 25. Phoenix Arms/RM Deluxe/.22/4564013
14	November 25, 2020	C&C Ammo, Inc., Boiling Springs, SC	26. Smith & Wesson/M&P Shield 40/.40/HSY1171 27. Ruger/LCP/.380/372394502
15	November 27, 2020	T&K Outdoors, Spartanburg, SC	28. Diamond Back/DB380/.380/ZB1926 29. Taurus/G2S/9mm/ABL160344 30. Taurus/G3C/9mm/ABL150826
16	November 27, 2020	Dead on Works, Cowpens, SC	31. Taurus/G3C/9mm/ABM200642
17	December 5, 2020	T&K Outdoors, Spartanburg, SC	32. Taurus/G3C/9mm/ABM215665 33. Taurus/G2C/9mm/ABL157120 34. Taurus/G3/9mm/ABM212606 35. Taurus/G2C/9mm/ABM221656 36. Taurus/G3C/9mm/ABM228160 37. Taurus/G3/9mm/ABM216047 38. Armscor of Phillipines/206/.38/RIA1879366
18	December 5, 2020	Eastside Pawn, Cowpens, SC	39. Ruger/EC9S/9mm/458-38904 40. SCCY/CPX-2/9mm/C045436 41. Beretta/APX/9mm/A058997X 42. SCCY/CPX-2/9mm/C019799 43. Ruger/EC9S/9mm/458-38815 44. Kel Tec/S2000 GEN2/9mm/FG0Z06

Count	Date	Dealer	Make/Model/Caliber/Serial Number
19	December 5, 2020	Carolina Barrel and Blade LLC, Greer, SC	45. SCCY/CPX-2/9mm/864250
20	December 5, 2020	Academy Sports, Greenville, SC	46. Sun City Machinery/Savage Arms, Inc./320/12-gauge shotgun/200085M 47. Smith & Wesson/SD40VE/.40/FCW9664
21	December 5, 2020	South Carolina Gun Company, Greer, SC	48. Taurus/PT738/.380/11759B 49. Ruger/LCP II/.380/380607857
22	December 6, 2020	Academy Sports, Greenville, SC	50. Taurus/856 Ultralite/.38/ABL126422 51. SCCY/CPX-2/9mm/C050398
23	December 6, 2020	Cabela's, Greenville, SC	52. UMAREX/Heckler & Koch Inc./HK 416 D/.22 Long Rifle/HB032018 53. UMAREX/Heckler & Koch Inc./HK 416 D/.22 Long Rifle/HB033034
24	December 15, 2020	All Stars Gold & Pawn, Spartanburg, SC	54. Taurus/G2C/9mm/TMW64984
25	December 15, 2020	Cash Today Pawn & Jewelry, Spartanburg, SC	55. Taurus/G2S/9mm/ABL174085 56. Taurus/G2S/9mm/ABL174172
26	December 17, 2020	T&K Outdoors, Spartanburg, SC	57. SCCY/CPX-2/9mm/C049203 58. Bersa/Thunder 380/.380/A85852
27	January 7, 2021	T&K Outdoors, Spartanburg, SC	59. Smith & Wesson/Bodyguard/.380/KHU3010 60. Smith & Wesson/M&P Shield 10035/9mm/JEZ0588 61. Mossberg/MC1SC/9mm/045643CP
28	January 8, 2021	Eastside Pawn, Cowpens, SC	62. SCCY/CPX-2/9mm/C074387 63. Smith & Wesson/M&P Bodygaurd 380/.380/CLK4809 64. Kahr Arms/CW380/.380/RK1961

Count	Date	Dealer	Make/Model/Caliber/Serial Number
29	January 8, 2021	Cash Today Pawn & Jewelry, Spartanburg, SC	65. SCCY/CPX-2/9mm/C045562 66. SCCY/CPX-2/9mm/C045563
30	December 5, 2020 (attempted purchase)	C&C Ammo, Inc., Boiling Springs, SC	67. Mossberg/715/.22LR/EVF4487190
31	December 6, 2020 (attempted purchase)	C&C Ammo, Inc., Boiling Springs, SC	68. EAA/Windicator/.38 Special/1573658
32	December 15, 2020 (attempted purchase)	C&C Ammo, Inc., Boiling Springs, SC	69. Taurus/G3/9mm/ABM242141
33	January 9, 2021 (attempted purchase)	C&C Ammo, Inc., Boiling Springs, SC	70. Taurus/PT-22/.22/580622 71. Canik/TP9DA/9mm/20BJ07724

b. Defendant **DAQUASIA CATHERINE MERCADO**, aided and abetted by Defendants **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO** and **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ**, and by others known and unknown to the grand jury:

Count	Date	Dealer	Make/Model/Caliber/Serial Number
34	October 9, 2020	Cash Today Pawn & Jewelry, Spartanburg, SC	72. Phoenix Arms/HP22/.22/4568117 73. Phoenix Arms/HP22/.22/4567679
35	October 11, 2020	Academy Sports, Greenville, SC	74. Taurus/G2C/9mm/ABJ908481

Count	Date	Dealer	Make/Model/Caliber/Serial Number
36	October 12, 2020	Eastside Pawn, Cowpens, SC	75. SCCY/CPX-2/9mm/C025306 76. SCCY/CPX-2/9mm/C019798 77. SCCY/CPX-2/9mm/C025308 78. SCCY/CPX-1/9mm/C026365
37	December 21, 2020	Cash Today Pawn & Jewelry, Spartanburg, SC	79. SCCY/CPX-1/9mm/C058551 80. SCCY/CPX-1/9mm/C059313 81. SCCY/CPX-1/9mm/C059143
38	December 30, 2020	All Stars Gold & Pawn, Spartanburg, SC	82. Glock/22/.40/YUZ345
39	March 30, 2021	All Stars Gold & Pawn, Spartanburg, SC	83. Glock/22/.40/BEP703 US
40	March 31, 2021 (attempted purchase)	Gold & Silver Pawn, Spartanburg, SC	84. Phoenix Arms/HP22/.22LR/4578734 85. Phoenix Arms/HP22/.22LR/ 4578735 86. Phoenix Arms/HP22/.22LR/ 4578732

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(a)(6), 924(a)(2) and 2.

FORFEITURE

FIREARM OFFENSES:

Upon conviction for felony violations of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922 as charged in this Indictment, the Defendants, **DESTINY SHANNON MERCADO, DAQUASIA CATHERINE MERCADO** and **RUBEN ENRIQUE CHAVEZ-MUNIZ**, shall forfeit to the United States all of the Defendants' rights, title and interest in:

- (a) any firearms and ammunition (as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921) –
 - (1) involved in or used in any knowing violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922, or violation of any other criminal law of the United States, or intended to be used in a crime of violence.
- Firearms:**
- (1) Glock, Model 22, .40 caliber pistol
Serial Number: BEP703
Recovered from: Daquasia Catherine Mercado
 - (2) Glock, Model 19, 9mm caliber pistol
Serial Number: AEKZK433
Daquasia Catherine Mercado

Pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(d)(1) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c).

A True BILL

[REDACTED]
FOREPERSON

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